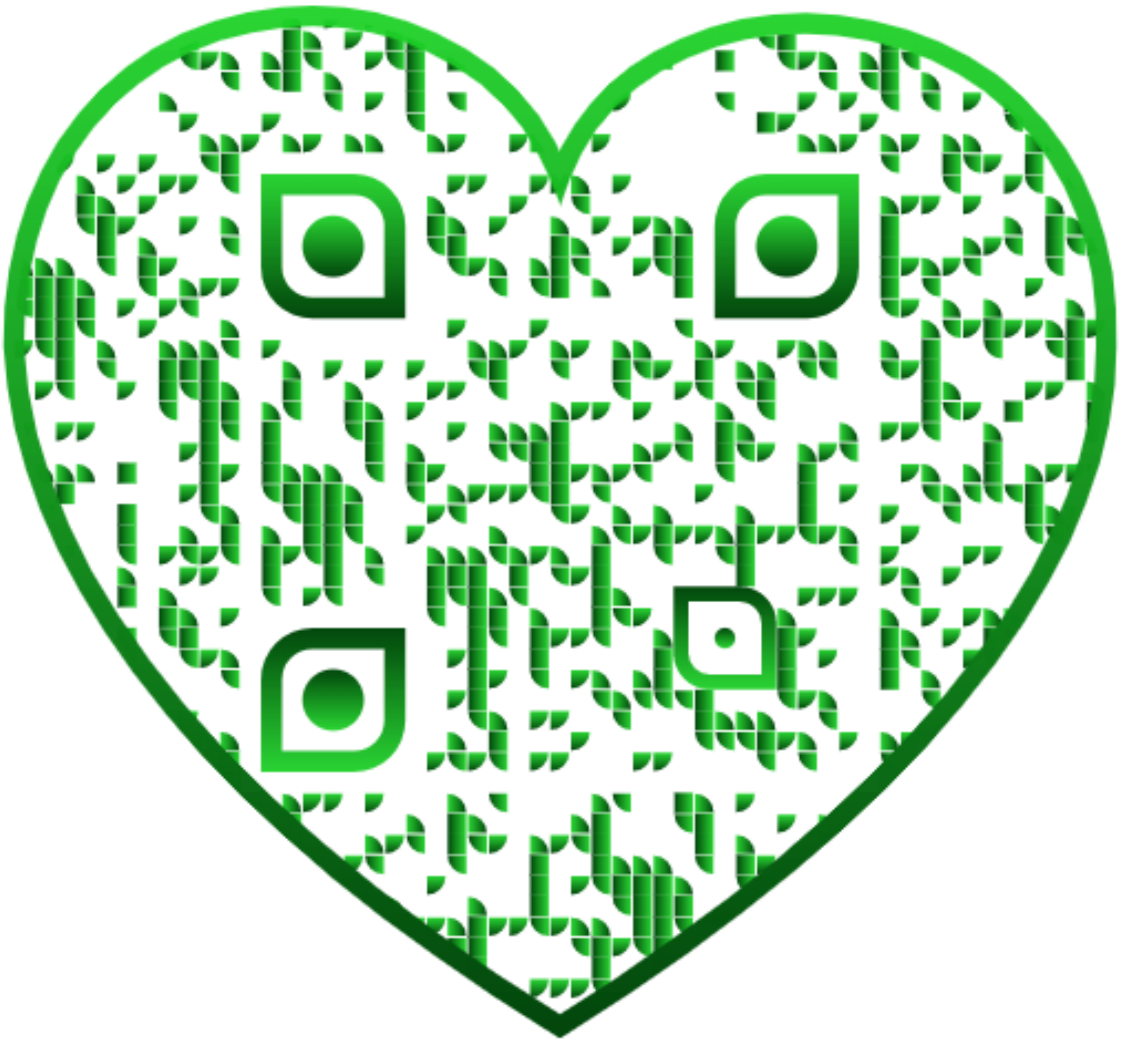
Partial list of prescription abbreviations

Abbreviation	Latin	Meaning
aa	ana	of each
ad	ad	up to
a.c.	ante cibum	before meals
a.d.	auris dextra	right ear
ad lib.	ad libitum	use as much as one desires; freely
admov.	admove	apply
agit	agita	stir/shake
alt. h.	alternis horis	every other hour
a.m.	Ante Meridiem	morning, before noon
amp		ampule
amt		amount
aq	aqua	water
a.l., a.s.	auris laeva, auris sinistra	left ear
A.T.C.		around the clock
a.u.	auris utraque	both ears
bis	bis	twice
b.d./b.i.d.	bis in die	twice daily
B.M.		bowel movement
bol.	bolus	as a large single dose (usually intravenously)
B.S.		blood sugar
B.S.A		body surface areas
BUCC		inside cheek
cap., caps.	capsula	capsule
c	cum	with (usually written with a bar on top of the "c")
c	cibos	food
cc	cum cibos	with food, (but also cubic centimetre)
cf		with food
comp.		compound



cr., crm		cream
D5W		dextrose 5% solution (sometimes written as D_5W)
D5NS		dextrose 5% in normal saline (0.9%)
D.A.W.		dispense as written
dc, D/C, disc		discontinue
dieb. alt.	diebus alternis	every other day
dil.		dilute
disp.		dispense
div.		divide
d.t.d.	dentur tales doses	give of such doses
D.W.		distilled water
elix.		elixir
e.m.p.	ex modo prescripto	as directed
emuls.	emulsum	emulsion
et	et	and
ex aq	ex aqua	in water
fl., fld.		fluid
ft.	fiat	make; let it be made
g		gram
gr		grain
gtt(s)	gutta(e)	drop(s)
H		hypodermic
h, hr	hora	hour
h.s.	hora somni	at bedtime
ID		intradermal
IM		intramuscular (with respect to injections)
inj.	injectio	injection
IP		intraperitoneal
IV		intravenous
IVP		intravenous push
IVPB		intravenous piggyback
L.A.S.		label as such
LCD		coal tar solution
lin	linimentum	liniment
liq	liquor	solution
lot.		lotion

M.	misce	mix
m, min	minimum	a minimum
mcg		microgram
m.d.u.	more dicto utendus	to be used as directed
mEq		milliequivalent
mg		milligram
mist.	mistura	mix
mitte	mitte	send
mL		millilitre
nebul	nebula	a spray
N.M.T.		not more than
noct.	nocte	at night
non rep.	non repetatur	no repeats
NS		normal saline (0.9%)
1/2NS		half normal saline (0.45%)
N.T.E.		not to exceed
o_2		both eyes, sometimes written as o_2
o.d.	oculus dexter	right eye
o.s.	oculus sinister	left eye
o.u.	oculus uterque	both eyes
oz		ounce
per	per	by or through
p.c.	post cibum	after meals
p.m.	Post Meridiem	evening or afternoon
prn	pro re nata	as needed
p.o.	per os	by mouth or orally
p.r.		by rectum
pulv.	pulvis	powder
q	quaque	every
q.a.d.	quoque alternis die	every other day
q.a.m.	quaque die ante meridiem	every day before noon
q.d.s.	quater die sumendus	four times a day
q.p.m.	quaque die post meridiem	every day after noon
q.h.	quaque hora	every hour
q.h.s.	quaque hora somni	every night at bedtime

q.1h	quaque 1 hora	every 1 hour; (can replace "1" with other numbers)
q.d.	quaque die	every day
q.i.d.	quater in die	four times a day
q.o.d.		every other day
qqh	quater quaque hora	every four hours
q.s.	quantum sufficiat	a sufficient quantity
QWK		every week
R		rectal
rep., rept.	repetatur	repeats
RL, R/L		Ringer's lactate
s	sine	without (usually written with a bar on top of the "s")
s.a.	secundum artum	use your judgement
SC, subc, subcut, subq, SQ		subcutaneous
sig		write on label
SL		sublingually, under the tongue
sol	solutio	solution
s.o.s., si op. sit	si opus sit	if there is a need
ss	semis	one half
stat	statim	immediately
supp	suppositorium	suppository
susp		suspension
syr	syrupus	syrup
tab	tabella	tablet
tal., t	talus	such
tbsp		tablespoon
troche	trochiscus	lozenge
tsp		teaspoon
t.i.d.	ter in die	three times a day
t.d.s.	ter die sumendum	three times a day
t.i.w.		three times a week
top.		topical
T.P.N.		total parenteral nutrition
tr, tinc., tinct.		tincture
u.d., ut. dict.	ut dictum	as directed
ung.	unguentum	ointment

U.S.P.		United States Pharmacopoeia
vag		vaginally
w		with
w/o		without
X		times
Y.O.		years old

To avoid ambiguity, the following abbreviations are not recommended [1] [2]:

- **a.u., a.s., a.d.** - Latin for both, left and right ears; the "a" can be misread to be an "o" and interpreted to mean both, right or left eyes
- **bt** - intended to mean "bedtime", but can be misread as "bid" or twice daily.
- **d/c** - can mean "discontinue" or "discharge"
- **h.s.** - can mean half strength or "hour of sleep"
- **IJ** - intended to mean "injection", but can be misread as "IV"
- **IN** - intended to mean "intranasal", but can be misread as "IM" or "IV"
- **IU** - intended to mean "international unit", but can be misread as "IV" or "10"
- **o.d., o.s., o.u.** - the "o" can be misread as "a".
- **o.d.** - can mean "once daily" or "right eye".
- **OJ** - intended to mean "orange juice" but can be misread as "OD" or "OS"
- **q4PM** - intended to mean "at 4 PM", but can be misread as every 4 hours
- **q.d., q1d** - intended to mean "every day" but can be misread as "q.i.d." or 4 times a day
- **q.o.d.** - meant "every other day" but the "o" can be interpreted as "." or "i" resulting in double or eight times the frequency
- **SC** - meant "subcutaneaous" but mistaken for "SL" for "sublingual"
- **SQ** - meant "subcutaneaous" but mistaken for "5Q" or 5 every dose
- '*ss* - intended to mean "sliding scale" or "1/2", but can be mistaken as "55"
- '*SSI, SSRI* - intended to mean "sliding scale insulin" or "sliding scale regular insulin", but can be mistaken as "strong solution of iodine" or "selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor
- **T.I.W** - meant 3 times a week but mistaken for twice a week
- **U** - meant "units" but mistaken for "0", "4" (so "4U" can become "40" and the "U" is assumed), or misread as "cc" when poorly written; conversely **cc** can be mistaken for "U"
- **µg** - meant "microgram" but mistaken for "mg"; this 1000-fold error can cause potentially fatal misunderstandings

Notice that SID or S.I.D. is not a recognized abbreviation and should not be used.